

Beyond Behavior ***Sociocultural Dynamics of*** ***Education***

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The Agenda of Schooling

- Literacy and its implications**
 - The purpose of schooling: Explicit instruction to prepare children for future cognitive challenges**
 - Assessment as a crucial component**
 - Focus on student and teacher Behavior**
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The Agenda of Schooling

- ***The Extractive Recruitment Model of Schooling (Serpell, 1999)***
 - **The social function of schooling in developing countries...and in the USA?**
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The Focus on Behavior

- ❑ Premise of the behavioral focus –
“Deep down, inside, people are the same wherever you go”...underneath all the “outside stuff”
 - ❑ Historical origins of the focus on behavior – An attempt to duplicate the natural sciences, based on animal research
 - ❑ Problem with the premise
 - *Decontextualization of behavior*
 - *Diversity*
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The Focus on Socio-Cultural Contexts

- ❑ ***Ecological Systems Approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)***
 - ❑ ***Developmental Niche (Super & Harkness, 1986, 1996, 2006)***
 - ❑ ***Physical and social settings***
 - ❑ ***Customs of child rearing***
 - ❑ ***Psychology of caretakers***
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Studying Parental Beliefs

- ❑ **What: A parent's culturally rooted understanding about the nature of children, the developmental process and the meaning of behavior.**

 - ❑ **Why:**
 - they are a central component of adult cognition,
 - they help us to understand parental actions,
 - they are one aspect of the context of child development and
 - they provide insights into processes of cultural transmission and cultural change.
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Studies of the Child-in-Context

- The Baltimore Early Childhood Project (Serpell et al, 1993-1998)**
 - Hypotheses**
 - Participants**
 - Methodology – diaries, observations, inventories and interviews**
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What do Parents Think?

- ☐ **Parents have complex thoughts and beliefs about parenting irrespective of their education, income, and ethnicity.**
 - ☐ **They are eager to articulate them.**
 - ☐ **Parents value certain goals for their children over others.**
 - ☐ **They have strategies to help their children attain these goals and can talk about these strategies.**
 - ☐ **Parents think in culturally specific ways.**
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Home-School Connections

- **The recognized importance of involving parents in their children's education:**

 - **Two ways to conceptualize home-school connections:**
 - **Congruence between family (and community) and agenda of schooling**
 - **Depth of understanding between parents and teachers**
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Home-School Connections

- **The match between family life and the agenda of schooling**
 - **Preoccupation with material resources or lack thereof**
 - **Compensatory interventions; “giving it away”; genteel racism**
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Parent-Teacher Relations

- ☐ Do teachers really know what parents think? Do teachers really understand?
 - ☐ What do parents think about school and teacher?
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Parent-Teacher Relations

- **The School-to-Home Transmission Model (Swap, 1993)**
 - **Preoccupation with compliance**
 - **Educalization of parenting (Sandow, 1984) and disenfranchising of parents**
 - **Can educational professionals claim expertise? Or is it a continuation of hegemony?**
 - **The Partnership Model**
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Implications

- ❑ *We are not always taught directly and we do not always learn from positive reinforcement. We must go beyond behavior and take the context into account. **There is no behavior without a sociocultural context.***
 - ❑ *Children learn from being involved in activities that are specific to their cultures and families. Therefore, the **overall culture must be taken into account.** The culture of children's families must also be taken into account.*
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Implications

- ❑ ***Negotiate a shared understanding between the teacher and the parent***
 - ❑ ***Need for a Partnership Model. We need parent involvement if we want to be successful in initiating any real change or improvement. This can be done only if we **seriously, painstakingly include parents and families in the conversations.*****
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Implications

How we can establish partnership:

- ***Establish inter-subjectivity***
- ***Identify activities the child engages in outside of school***
- ***Identify socialization agents in the child's home***

□ ***Parents are the experts on their children. Educational professionals are experts of a different kind.***
